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ABSTRACT

In response to the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test indicating inadequacies in students' writing abilities in a Southwest Bronx elementary school, a study employed Evelyn Rothstein's developmental, systematic instructional approach to improve students' writing competencies. It was hypothesized that, as a result of the instructional program implemented between January and June of 1986, students would demonstrate an improvement in writing skills by (1) reducing the number of students falling below the state reference point by 1.5%; and (2) increasing by 3.4% the number of students who scored above the state reference point. These two objectives were achieved. The third objective postulated that, as a result of regularly monitoring specific writing strategies during the prescribed time period, 60% of the students would demonstrate sequential development of writing skills in three of five skill areas measured. Results indicated that only 29.6% of the students achieved this. However, this finding was interpreted as an encouraging statistic. (Statistical tables provide extensive comparison data, particularly on the state reference point/frequency distribution by both the class and school. Extensive sample tests and instructional materials are appended.) (JD)

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A FORMAL WRITING PROGRAM IN A FIFTH GRADE CLASS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE WRITING SCORES ON THE NEW YORK STATE FIFTH GRADE WRITING TEST

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
the National Ed. D. Program for Educational Leaders

Nova University

Introductory Practicum Report
Wilmington IV Cluster
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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Turetzky, Lois
DATE: August 12, 1986

CLUSTER: Wilmington IV
PRACTICUM: Introductory/ Individual

TITLE: The Implementation of a Formal Writing Program in a Fifth Grade Class in order to Improve the Writing Scores on the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test

ABSTRACT: This practicum report describes the implementation of a structured writing program in class 5-2 at Community Elementary School 73 in the Southwest Bronx. Scores on the spring 1984 and 1985 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Tests and current fifth grade student writing samples indicated the need to improve the writing competencies of students.

Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach by Evelyn Rothstein and the Writing Process as presented in the Silver Burdett English Series were the methodologies used to improve the writing competencies of students in class 5-2. Through the structured writing program, students were taught specific writing strategies: sentence expansion, substitution, combining and embedding, paragraph structure and organizational patterns. Students integrated these strategies in all areas of the curriculum. Workshops were conducted by Evelyn Rothstein and the Silver Burdett consultant. Student compositions were scored holistically using the Criteria for Rating Student Responses. Students improved their writing skills in a minimum of three out of five areas on the New York State Writing Product Analysis Sheet and made significant progress on the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test.

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND

Community Setting

School District Nine is located in the Southwest Bronx in the vicinity of Yankee Stadium and is one of 33 school districts in New York City. Approximately 200,000 people live in the four square mile area. The population is 80 percent Black and Puerto Rican American.

According to the 1980 census, the economically blighted area is plagued with high levels of unemployment, poverty, and crime. Over the past ten years, 3,000 abandoned buildings with the loss of 43,000 housing units, have contributed to limited housing facilities and substandard housing conditions.

The census also indicated that the educational level of the adult population fell below the national average in years of formal schooling and level of skills and annual earnngs.

The School

Community Elementary School 73 is one of 33 schools in School District Nine. Of the 925 students in the Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth Grade School, 521 students are Puerto Rican Americans, 401 Black and three others.

The Principal, Assistant Principal, Interim Acting Principal, 54 teachers, 16 paraprofessionals, one psychologist, one educational evaluator, two social workers, two guards, custodial and food service staff make up the school's professional and auxiliary staff.

There are 39 homogeneously grouped self-contained classes and four remedial reading and mathematics Pupils with Special Educational Needs (PSEN)/Chapter 1 funded programs. The Students To Achieve Reading Success (S.T.A.R.S.) reading program at C.E.S. 73 serviced 75 children in grades four and five and is staffed by one reading teacher and three paraprofessionals. The writer at the time of the written proposal was the Chapter 1 (S.T.A.R.S.) Assistant Program

Manager who supervised the S.T.A.R.S. Remedial Reading Program in 27 schools in the district in grades four through nine.

The principal divided the administrative and supervisory responsibilites in the following manner. The Principal oversees all aspects of the school program but supervises in particular the kindergarten, funded and cluster teachers. The cluster teacher teaches five 45 minute periods daily making it possible for the classroom teachers to have their contractual preparation time. One Assistant Principal supervises grades one, and two, and the Interim Acting Assistant Principal supervises grades three, four and five.

The Resource Room Teacher is funded by Special Education and services children who have been tested, evaluated and assigned to the resource room for 45 minutes of daily remedial instruction.

The United Federation of Teachers opened a Teachers' Resource Center in the school and the teacher in charge of the program does staff development within the school and serves as a resource person for the district.

Regional/National Context

This practicum explored the writing competencies of students in general and improved the writing competencies of a group of fifth grade students in Community Elementary School 73 in the Bronx, as measured by the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Competency Test.

According to the report "A Nation At Risk" (1983: 8):

1) Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing and comprehension.

2) About 13 percent of all 17 year-olds can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent.

This report indicates that there is much to be done to improve not only the reading level of our students and adults but the writing competency as well. The 40 percent functional illiteracy rate for minority youth is particularly significant since one-hundred percent of the school population involved in the practicum is minority.

Since the report "A Nation at Risk" states that 23 million adult American and 13 percent of seventeen year olds are functionally illiterate, then it becomes evident that the writing skills of many Americans are extremely limited. One reason for this problem, both nationally and regionally, is that in order to improve the writing competencies of students, it is necessary to first examine the writing competencies of teachers and their ability to teach writing.

Students are entering universities with limited writing skills. At each turning point in the student's education, whether it be elementary, junior or senior high school, someone blames someone else for the lack of providing basic writing skills.

Penfield (1980: 1-2) states:

> For far too long, university teachers have blamed the secondary teachers, who have blamed the primary teachers. Everyone of course, has blamed the students, their parents, the socio-economic conditions and the general moral decay of the nation.

The reason why writing has not been an integral and formal part of the curriculum is because many teachers lack the skill, ability, experience, and confidence to teach writing. Penfield (1980: 2) indicates:

> Teachers have not been adequately prepared as teachers of writing. While certification requirements will vary from one state to another, few teachers who graduated more than two years ago took English methods courses found them geared for more to the teaching of literature than the teaching of writing.

To further illustrate the seriousness of the problem, Calkins (1985: 26) in an article, "I Am The One Who Writes," discusses a study conducted by Donald Graves. Graves discovered that out of 169 courses given in the teaching of reading in 36 different institutes, only two were offered in the teaching of writing.

Another factor that must be considered in studying the writing competencies of our students is the much discussed reading/writing connection. In the past decade, there has been much research to support the theory that there is a high correlation between the ability to read and write (Indrisano, 1984; Tierney, 1984; Slotsky, 1983; Goodman K. and Y., 1983).

Of the 27 students who participated in this practicum, 11 of them were Chapter 1 Remedial Reading Students. Chapter 1 Remedial Reading Programs are funded by the federal government and

students who qualify for these services must meet specific criteria. In our region and district, students who either fall below the normal curve equivalent (NCE) of 34 on the California Achievement Test or have been left back are eligible for Chapter 1 services. According to Wilkinson (1980: 6):

> ...(the) NCE can be interpreted as a ranking. This means that a student's score places him on a scale of 99 in relation to the students in his grade. The number created is an equal interval normalized standard score. The means it can be added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided. Even though it is not a percentile, converting a percentile to the number does not change a student's rank.

In comparison Wilkinson explains that percentiles and grade equivalents are "nonequal interval" numbers. The distance between various rankings are not equal and hence can not be computed or averaged in any other way.

If the research is correct in assuming that students who do not read well do not write well, then this is extremely important in the context of this practicum. Stotsky (1983: 8) in an article researching reading and writing relationships states:

> The most extensive investigation of the relationship between reading achievement and writing ability was conducted by Loban (1963: 75). He found a high correlation between reading scores and ratings of writing quality in the upper elementary grades and concluded that: those who read well also write well; those who read poorly also write poorly.

There are many studies that measure the effect of the teaching of writing and reading comprehension and the teaching of reading and how it effects writing. Results are mixed. However, according to Stotsky (1983), most studies show that the use of writing to improve reading comprehension and recall of information was significantly higher when writing activities were integrated throughout the curriculum than when they were not, but those studies that sought to improve just writing skills did not have significant impact on reading comprehension.

Presently, the thrust in reading and writing research is to study the effects of the reading/writing connection and processes. Researchers (Stotsky, 1983; Moffet, 1983; Wittrock, 1983; Echnoff, 1983; Applebee and Langer, 1983) are examining the relationship between composing and comprehending, their metacognitive similarities, and the developmental stages of both disciplines. The research is on-going and there is still much to learn. The fact is, however

that there is much evidence to support the premise that there is most definitely a reading/writing connection.

Writing has taken its place in the forefront of the curriculum. You need only to look at the hundreds of nationally validated writing projects and institutes that have developed in the last decade, the plethora of journals and literature that have been written, and the recent revision of the language arts and English textbooks to prove this point.

Since writing has been recognized as a fundamental and basic skill that is needed, 39 states have required writing competency tests. The national recognition that there is a critical need to improve the writing competencies of our students has clearly been stated.

New York State recognizes the importance of developing basic and minimum writing competencies and gives a Fifth, Eighth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Grade Writing Competency Test. This practicum concerned itself with the Fifth Grade Writing Test.

In the context of the research presented, it is now necessary to look at the reading/writing connection as it relates to Community Elementary School 73. New York City schools are ranked according to reading score. Out of 622 New York City Elementary Schools, C.E.S. 73 is ranked 618; that is fourth from the bottom. Only 26.9 percent of the children tested in April of 1985 were reading at or above grade level. Twenty percent of the student body had been classified as students with Limited English Proficiency. Students that were having difficulty in reading and were not reading at grade level, as well as the students with Limited English Proficiency, lacked sufficient skills to write well. In addition, their deficiencies in the areas of vocabulary and language development, content, organizational skills, concepts and knowledge contributed to their poor writing skills and habits. In reviewing the data, the reading/writing connection at C.E.S. 73 became evident.

Chapter 2

Identification Background and Evidence of the Problem

There was a definite need to improve the writing skills of the fifth grade students in School District Nine in the Bronx and the writing skills of the students at Community Elementary School 73 in particular. The need became evident as the writer carefully examined students' reports, compositions, daily assignments and trends of writing achievement over the past two years as measured by the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test.

Before the evidence and data are discussed in detail, it is necessary to provide some background into the history and purpose of the New York State Regents Evaluation and Competency Tests in general and the writing test in particular.

The New York State Board of Regents has mandated evaluation and competency tests in reading, writing and mathematics. In grades three and six, students take the State Pupil Evaluation Program Test (PEP Test) in reading and mathematics and the writing test in grade five. They take the Preliminary State Competency Test in reading and writing in grade nine and the Regents Competency Test in reading and writing in grades 11 and 12. Students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 take the State Regents Mathematics Test.

The purpose of the state evaluation and competency testing program is to identify students' deficiencies in reading, writing and mathematics. Once these weaknesses have been identified, remediation must be provided to assure that students eventually score at or above the state reference point on the mandated competency tests. This demonstrates that students have achieved a certain level of proficiency in these disciplines and are eligible to receive a Regents High School Diploma.

The New York State Writing Test for Fifth Grade Students began in the spring of 1983. According to the New York State Education Department's Writing Manual for Administrators and Teachers, the purpose for the test is to measure how well a student can write and to apply the results in the following way:

(1) Evaluating a student's current level of achievement in writing;
(2) Determining trends in students' ability to write;
(3) Indicating the extent of compensatory or remedial help, if any, that a student may need in order to achieve success on the preliminary competency test in writing; and
(4) Providing a basis for termination of remediation.

In addition to examining present students' written work, the results of the Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) Writing Test over the past two years showed that something had to be done to improve the writing skills of the fifth grade students at C.E.S. 73. In fact, what was and is still needed is a schoolwide writing program that has its roots in the kindergarten. However, the writer was not in a position at that point in time to mandate such a program. A look at the 1984 PEP Writing Test indicated that 33.77 percent of the fifth grade students who took the test scored below the state reference point of 8. The 1985 PEP Writing Test indicated that 36.79 percent of the students scored below the state reference point. The decrease of 3.10 percentage points demonstrated the need to provide a closely monitored and formal writing program for fifth grade students at C.E.S. 73.

Detailed Documentation

In order to understand the statistical analysis of the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test, one must first explain the components of the test and how it is scored. Students must demonstrate their ability to write two different types of prose on a two part test. One piece of writing is experiential in nature and the other creative. While the test is untimed, it is suggested that the test be administered over a two day period and each part take approximately 90 minutes to complete. Students are told to go through various stages of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing and the directions given by the teacher and test encourage them to do so.

The test is scored holistically. This means that the writing is judged on its overall merit rather than individual errors. The New York State criteria for rating students' responses holistically is based on a four (4) point system, one (1) being the lowest level of response and

four (4) the highest. A student can score a zero (0) if the written piece is indecipherable and does not address the topic.

Since holistic scoring is subjective in nature, two people are required to rate a piece of writing. If there is a discrepancy in the scoring, a third and independent rater is to read the piece in order to resolve the situation. The two contiguous scores remain.

The highest score that can be obtained on the Fifth Grade Writing Test is 16. A student could conceivably receive an 8 on both the first and second parts of the test. Therefore, he/she would receive a total of 16. Please note that while students are judged on a four point system, there are two raters reading one work. The combination score of the two raters equals the score for the test.

For example, Student A on Part 1 of the test is given a 1 by Rater 1 and a 2 by Rater 2; the sum is 3. On Part 2, Student A is given a 2 from Rater 1 and a 2 from Rater 2; the sum is 4. Combine the sum of Parts 1 and 2 to get a total score of 7 (1+2+2+2=7).

Student B in Part 1 of the test is given a 0 by Rater 1 and a 1 by Rater 2. Since the scores are discrepant, a third reader resolves the score with a 1; the sum is 2. On Part 2 of the test, Rater 1 gives a 1 and Rater 2 a 4. Since the scores are discrepant, Rater 3 resolves the score with a 2. The contiguous scores of 1 and 2 are used. The sum of Part 2 is 3. The sum of Parts 1 and 2 is 5 (1+1+1+2=5). See Table 1 and Appendix B page).

Table 1

Class Record Sheet

Pupil Name	Part 1 Scores Rater 1	Part 1 Scores Rater 2	Part 1 Resolved Scores if Necessary	PART 2 Scores Rater 1	PART 2 Scores Rater 2	PART 2 Resolved Scores if Necessary	Total Score Sum of Part 1 and 2 Score
Student A	1	2	X	2	2	X	7
Student B	0	1	1-1	1	4	1-2	5

Out of 32 school districts in New York City, School District Nine scored the lowest on the Spring 1985 Fifth Grade Writing Test (see Table 2). Of the 2,177 students tested in the district, 63.16 percent scored at and above the New York State reference point. The New York State Writing Test Manual for Administrators and Teachers (1983: 20) states:

> A State Reference Point (SRP) of 8 has been established for the Writing Test for New York State Elementary Schools used in the Pupil Evaluation Program. This state reference point is based on pretest and field test data and should be considered as tentative. The Department will evaluate the results of the May 1983 test administration to determine what, if any, adjustments in this tentative reference point may be necessary. Pending any such adjustment, however, schools should schedule a student for remedial instruction if that student obtains a score lower than 8.

Kenneth Ormiston of the Research and Evaluation Division of the New York State Department of Education stated in a telephone conversation of April 9, 1986, that the State Reference Point of 8 is just a raw score and that students scoring below 8 must be given remediation in writing. The SRP of 8 was used in the 1984 and 1985 scoring of the Fifth Grade Writing Test.

Table 2

Citywide Results and Ranking by District on the Fifth Grade Writing Test From Lowest to Highest

RANK	DISTRICT	SCORE	RANK	DISTRICT	SCORE
1	9	63.16	17	30	81.31
2	12	68.16	18	05	81.70
3	16	71.46	19	20	82.12
4	3	71.49	20	21	82.37
5	23	71.73	21	11	82.71
6	32	71.93	22	22	82.81
7	04	73.10	23	13	83.52
8	19	74.34	24	27	84.25
9	07	74.51	25	29	85.13
10	06	74.73	26	02	85.19
11	10	75.15	27	28	88.54
12	08	75.21	28	18	89.08
13	17	78.57	29	15	89.11
14	01	79.17	30	31	90.06
15	14	79.85	31	25	92.18
15	24	80.76	32	33	92.78

At Community Elementary School 73, performance on the Spring 1984 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test showed that 33.77 percent of the students fell below the state reference point, and 66.23 percent of the students scored at and above it. The average percent of the mean of students who fell below the state reference point was 5.89 percent. The average percent of the mean of students who scored at and above the state reference point was 19.83 percent.

Table 3

Comparison to State Reference Point/Frequency Distribution by School
Community Elementary School 73 - 1984

Below State Reference Point				At and Above The State Reference Point			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent	Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent
00	3	3.90%	11.70%	08	10	12.99%	129.90%
01	0	.00%	.00%	09	12	15.58%	186.96%
02	3	3.90%	11.70%	10	7	9.09%	572.67%
03	1	1.30%	1.30%	11	6	7.79%	46.74%
04	4	5.19%	20.76%	12	5	6.49%	32.45%
05	5	6.49%	32.45%	13	4	5.19%	20.76%
06	7	9.09%	63.63%	14	3	3.90%	11.70%
07	3	3.90%	11.70%	15	2	2.61%	5.20%
				16	2	2.60%	5.20%
TOTAL	26	33.77%	153.24%		51	66.23%	1,011.58%
Average percent of the Mean			5.89%				19.83%

Performance on the Spring 1985 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test showed that 36.79 percent of the students at Community Elementary School 73 fell below the state reference point, and 63.21 percent of the students scored at and above it. The average percent of the mean of students who fell below the state reference point was 9.02 percent. The average percent of the mean of students at and above the state reference point was 12.98 percent.

Table 4

Comparison to State Reference Point/Frequency Distribution by school
Community Elementary School 73 - 1985

Below State Reference Point				At and Above The State Reference Point			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent	Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent
00	0	.00%	.00%	08	21	19.81%	416.01%
01	0	.00%	.00%	09	8	7.55%	60.04%
02	5	4.72%	23.60%	10	10	9.43%	94.03%
03	2	1.89%	3.78%	11	1	.94%	.94%
04	16	15.09%	241.44%	12	16	15.09%	241.44%
05	6	5.66%	33.96%	13	0	.00%	.00%
06	4	3.77%	15.08%	14	6	5.66%	53.96%
07	6	5.66%	33.96%	15	0	.00%	.00%
				16	5	4.72%	23.60%
Total	39	36.79%	351.82%		67	63.21%	869.71%
Average Percent of the Mean			9.02%				12.98%

Test scores showed that more students scored below the state reference point in 1985 than in 1984 and conversely fewer students scored above the state reference point in 1985 than in 1984. The difference between the average of the mean score in 1985 as compared to 1984 was 3.13 percent. The difference between the average of the mean score of students at and above the state reference point in 1985 as compared to 1984 was 6.85 percent. Therefore, in 1985 there was a 3.13 percent increase of the average of the mean of the students falling below the state reference point, and a decrease of 6.85 percent of the average of the mean of students scoring at and above the state reference point. The purpose of this practicum was to reverse this negative trend (see Table 5).

Table 5

Average of the Mean Below and Above the State Reference Point in 1984 as Compared to 1985 and the Negative Difference on the New York State Writing Test

Mean Below 1984	Mean Below 1985	Mean Difference
5.89%	9.02%	(-)3.13%
Mean Above 1984	**Mean Above 1985**	**Mean Difference**
19.83%	12.98%	(-)6.85%

The New York State Writing Product Analysis Sheet was used to diagnose and monitor students' writing difficulties and their progress. The Writing Product Analysis Sheet is divided into five sections: task/content, organization, sentence structure, language and mechanics/usage (see Appendix C, page 61). Weaknesses in each area were identified. The Writing Product Analysis Sheet was scored holistically using the Criteria for Rating Student Responses (see Appendix A, page 59). Writing will be scored on a scale of 0-4. For example: in evaluating a composition for task/content, the criteria as stated in the Criteria for Student Response Sheet in the Writing Manual for Administrators and Teachers (1983: 19) would be:

0 - [Paper] totally unrelated to topic.

1 - Minimally addresses the assigned topic but lacks a plan of organization.

2 - Attempts to develop the assigned topic but demonstrates weakness in organization and may include digressions.

3 - Develops the assigned topic using an acceptable plan of organization.

4 - Develops the assigned topic in an interesting and imaginative way.

Sixty percent of the students were expected to demonstrate one increment of growth in three out of five areas on the New York State Writing Product Analysis Sheet.

What Has Been Done About the Problem

There has never been a real emphasis in the teaching of writing as a separate discipline. Writing has generally taken a back seat to reading and has been integrated sporadically throughout the various disciplines.

This year, the principal of C.E.S. 73 recognized the need to improve the writing skills of his students. He asked teachers to have students write compositions and submit them to their site supervisors for periodic review. He has also, for the first time, assigned a cluster teacher to a creative writing teaching position. This teacher sees 25 different classes once a week for a creative writing period. The writer spoke to this teacher and was told that she had no formal

training in the teaching of writing. She said, that when the assignment was made, she went out and bought some books on writing and is doing what she feels needs to be done.

Probable Causes of the Problem

Until the implementation of this practicum, there was no formal structured writing program and no teacher trained to teach writing and the writing process. There was no prescribed scope and sequence of writing skills and tasks, so teachers were on their own to teach writing as they saw fit.

Nancy Olson (1981: 2) in an article titled "Writing Instruction," reports that in a study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress of Writing of 9, 13 and 17 year olds:

> 13 and 17 year olds do not receive much direct writing instruction, nor are they required to do much writing in school. Very few have access to a writing program that includes pre-writing instruction, oral and written feedback, encouragement to write several drafts of papers, and opportunities to revise papers after they have been reviewed by teachers.

Graves (1978: 32) writes:

> Teachers report that they do not write because they don't like writing, believe they are poor writers, do not have time to write because of teaching demands, or do not believe it necessary to practice writing in order to teach it.

To further prove the point, Daniels and Zemelman (1985: 15) state:

> Though outsiders find it strange to discover this, most English and Language Arts teachers have relatively little training in writing or how to teach it. Composition has long been the stepchild of the "three Rs", a fact that is reflected in the school curricula.

The quality of time students spend writing contributes to the development of good writing skills. Goodlad (1984) observed that 28.3 percent of the early elementary and 30.4 percent of the upper elementary time is spent on writing. Most of this time however is not spent on formal writing instruction.

Goodlad (1984: 106-107) found that:

> A substantial amount of student time in the early school years is spent on writing. But much of this, as we know from their studies, is answering questions in workbooks, filling in blank spaces on short narratives and so on. The frequency of even this kind of writing at the secondary level was about two-thirds as much as junior high school and half as much as senior high school, as compared with elementary classes. Students'

> experiences with writing decreased, then, as they moved from upper elementary to senior high school.

Instructional materials are only as good as the teacher using them. However, providing good instructional materials, with in-depth teacher training and close supervision can enhance and improve the teaching of any discipline.

Most English and Language Arts books in the elementary schools up to a few years ago concentrated on the teaching of grammar. Writing assignments were integrated throughout the texts, but they were never the focus of the teaching. Today, we have seen a complete turn-around. The new English textbooks are now emphasizing the writing process and de-emphasizing the grammar.

There have been numerous studies to show that the teaching of grammar has had no real effect on improving writing composition. Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer, as cited by Straw (1981: 149), stated:

> The conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: The teaching of grammar has an negligible or, because it usually displaces some intruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing.

In an extensive study, Sutton, as cited by Keen (1981: 168) discovered: "There is no evidence to support the notion that knowledge of grammar terminology aids one in being a better writer, reader, speaker, or listener".

However, research does indicate that specific writing strategies do have a positive effect on the improvement of composition. In a study using the sentence combining strategy, Mellon (1969), as cited by Straw (1981: 151-152) states:

> ...not only did this story provide evidence that sentence-combining practice is effective in fostering and enhancing language development but also completed further evidence about the ineffectiveness of instruction in traditional grammar.

The writer in this practicum provided the target group with the New Silver Burdett English series which emphasized the writing process and a program called Teaching Writing A Developmental Systematic Approach by Evelyn Rothstein. This program provided the teacher with specific writing strategies to enhance students' writing skills.

To assure success and proper use of the materials and program the writer and Rothstein provided on-going teacher training and support. Monitoring assured that certain skills were covered, detected difficulties that either students or teachers were having with the program, and provided early intervention when necessary.

Prior to the implementation of the practicum, student compositions were monitored by the on-site supervisors. Since there was no formal writing program, with specific strategies and scope and sequence, monitoring was limited to the fact that a certain number of compositions were written monthly.

There were many reasons why students at C.E.S.73 wrote poorly. The primary reason was the lack of a formalized program or schoolwide policy with regard to a sequentially developed series of writing strategies. Teachers were not mandated to teach writing as an integral part of their every day program, but were asked by the administration to include writing in the curriculum. The administration, however, gave little direction, guidance or support to encourage a successful writing program. Teachers had no formal training in the teaching of writing and did not know how to successfully integrate writing across the curriculum. There were no instructional materials or supplies to assist teachers in this area. Other then the monitoring of compositions, teachers were given little , if any constructive criticism in the teaching of writing. Teachers were under extreme pressure to improve reading scores as only 26.9 percent of the students tested on the California Achievement Test in April of 1985 were reading at or above grade level. As teachers viewed the problem, writing was not a major concern. Teachers had to be made aware of the current research involving the reading/writing connection because the teaching of one should compliment the teaching of the other. Building on this year's practicum, the reading/writing connection will be emphasized in greater detail during the 1986-1987 school year, particularly in the grades the writer supervises. The writer is now an on-site supervisor and will have a specific grade assignment in the fall.

Chapter 3

Terminal Objectives

The writer has identified three terminal objectives for this practicum.

a. As a result of using specific writing instructional materials and strategies during the the period January 1986 to June 1986, the students in class 5-2 will demonstrate an improvement in writing skills by reducing by 1.5 percent , the average percent of the mean, the number of students falling below the state reference point in 1986 as compared to the spring 1984 and spring 1985 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test.

b. As a result of using specific writing instructional strategies during the period January 1986 to June 1986, the students in class 5-2 will demonstrate an improvement in writing skills by increasing by 3.4 percent, the average percent of the mean, the students who scored above the state reference point in 1986 as compared to the spring 1984 and spring 1985 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test.

c. As a result of regularly monitoring specific writing strategies during the period January 1986 to June 1986, 60 percent of the students in class 5-2 will demonstrate sequential development of writing skills in three out of five skill areas by achieving at least one increment of growth as measured by the New York State Writing Product Analysis Sheet.

Chapter 4

Decision on Strategy

Research Findings

Students involved in the practicum at Community Elementary School 73 were introduced to the writing process. The process is in the forefront of writing research today. According to Britton and others (1975: 22-23), there are three stages in the writing process: conception, incubation, and production. Conception is the decision to write. The decision to write may be imposed by an external force or may result from the need to express or communicate one's ideas.

Writing is based on many types of personal experiences. A writer, states Britton, Burgess, Martin, Mcleod and Rosen (1975: 24):

> ...summons up all his powers, his knowledge, his feelings and attitudes, and he may have to struggle to fit his idea of this current task into what he knows he must do. If the method to be followed is explicit or unfamiliar, he may need time to draw on the complex inter-relations of his experience and its realization in language-and this includes as well as his primary experience, all those other things he has heard about, read about, and imagined. Even if the task is something he doesn't care about but must do, he must begin by trying to understand what to do.

The conception stage is finalized when the writer has some idea of what he is going to write about and an approach to the presentation. Incubation is the second stage of the writing process. This is the period in which the writer thinks, organizes and plans what is to be written. It is sometimes difficult to separate the internalized stages of conception and incubation as they are often interrelated.

Preparation for writing involves stimulation. The more information or ideas the writer perceives, the easier it is to begin the process. The third or productive stage is the writing itself. This process has been studied through observation, discussion, and evaluation of the writer's processes. Production includes making revisions, pausing, rewriting and reorganizing the writing material (33-37).

Donald M. Murray describes the writing process in three other terms: prevision, vision, and revision. His prevision stage corresponds to the conception and incubation stages discussed earlier. Murray, as cited by Cooper and Odel (1977: 86) states:

> This term encompasses everything that precedes the first draft - receptive experience such as awareness (conscious and unconscious), observation, remembering; and exploratory experience, such as research reading, interviewing, and note-taking. Writers practice the prevision skills of selecting, connecting and evaluating significant bits of information provided by receptive and exploratory experience.

The vision is the actual writing or first draft and corresponds in part to the production stage previously mentioned. The revision stage is the rewriting of the product until the writer is satisfied with what he has produced. Understanding the writing process can give teachers insight into the teaching of writing and its complicated processes.

Just as reading readiness is important to the teaching of reading, writing readiness should be too. In discussing writing readiness as a developmental process, Charles Stallard (1977: 776) states:

> Writing readiness will be that state of development where the individual has acquired linguistic competence (a vocabulary and syntactic foundation), fundamental concepts related to composition, and a set of processes that enable one to approach the task of writing with a reasonable chance of success. There are other factors such as self-confidence, attitude, and desire to learn but these will be developed if we approach instruction in oral and written composition developmentally and preplan success' into the child's experience.

Seeley, Seeley and Millmore (1979: 3-16) describe the beginning writing process as "...a complex symbolic representation of a person's thoughts and images" and found that research done at the University of London Institute of Education indicates that writing falls into three basic postures or categories:

1. The transactional posture. This is language concerned with getting things done. It involves giving information, instructions, explanations, and opinions; recording facts; and attempting to persuade and advise others.
2. The expressive posture. This is language which is close to the self, used to reveal the nature of the person, to verbalize his consciousness, and to exhibit his close relation to the reader. Expressive language is a free flow of ideas and feelings.

3. The poetic posture. Poetic language is a verbal construct, fashioned in a particular way to make a pattern. Language is used as an art medium.

Most writing of young children falls into the transactional posture. The more mature the child, the more frequently he/she will write in the expressive posture. In the beginning stages of writing, the poetic posture is limited. However, it does occur. Children will at anytime move in and out of all three postures. Teachers must be aware of these categories but not place a heavy emphasis on any one in particular.

Teachers should encourage daily writing. Practice in writing and positive reinforcement in the process can only help to improve children's skills and attitudes towards writing. Developing these concepts and attitudes at an early age is extremely important.

In 1976 Majorie Cook, the principal of the Stowe Vermont Elementary School, became interested in improving the writing program in her school. After surveying the 21 teachers on her staff, she discovered that not one of them had any training in the teaching of writing. Cook and a teacher on her staff were trained in the writing process and over a period of time were successfully able to implement the process in their school. Test results indicated that the program worked. Cook (1981: 84) states:

> In one of the first years that the district used the program, one sixth grade class participated; another did not. The language test scores of those who participated, ...were two years higher on the average, than the scores of the non participants. The first grades in December, 1981 were further ahead than any first grade classes of past years at a comparable time in the school year.... The staff also believes that the large difference in the reading of kindergarteners is due to their writing experiences.

School District 15 in Brooklyn, New York has been working with Lucy McCormick Calkins in implementing the writing process throughout the district. This highly integrated community has been successful in improving the writing scores of their students since the inception of the program. Out of 32 New York City School Districts, District 15 now ranks fifth from the top having 89.11 percent of the students writing at and above the state reference point on the New York City Fifth Grade Writing Test (see Table 2, page 9).

The writing project movement began in 1973 with the development of the Bay Area Writing Project, Berkeley, California. As a result of this project, there are now 100 projects associated with the National Writing Project Network, an outgrowth of the original project. Many of these and other projects are funded by universities, school districts, state resources and Title 14C of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Each chapter of the National Writing Project holds a summer institute. Participants who are teachers become immersed totally in the writing process. While each project may differ in some ways, Penfield (1980: 2) states that they all work under the same basic assumption:

1. That successful teachers of writing can be identified; the best practices of successful teachers can be effectively demonstrated to others.
2. That the best teacher of teachers is usually another teacher who has had success in a similar situation.
3. That much is known about the teaching of writing, although most teachers are unaware of that knowledge themselves.

Those involved in the institutes write, share successful teaching techniques and strategies, and are exposed to the current research and literature in the field. Teachers are teaching teachers the strategies that they have found successful.

Daniels and Zaiman (1985) state that since the projects have begun, over four million students have benefitted and tens of thousands of teachers have been trained. These projects have had a tremendous impact in improving the writing competencies of teachers and students.

The Individualized Language Arts Program, sometimes called the Weehawken Writing Project, is particularly significant to this practicum because the program Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach (which was used with the targeted population) is based on the writing strategies of the Weehawken Project.

According to a study conducted by the Weehawken Board of Education (1970 - 1971: 5):

> Statistics showed that Weehawken students were now writing longer, richer, and more varied sentences...[and] were using more series of words and word groups, to convey greater amounts of information.... Above all, these youngsters tended to write a higher proportion of complex sentences, and fewer simple sentences as the year went by.

Other studies of students participating in the Weehawken Writing Project showed gains at the .05 level of significance as compared to groups not involved in the project. The Rochester Board of Education has used the Weehawken Writing Project for the past 14 years and has had tremendous success with it.

The New York City Learning to Read Through the Arts Program used the Weehawken Writing Project to improve the writing skills of their students. Scoring holistically and computing the mean from the pre to the post test, 409 students scored a mean of 2.27 on the pre test, and a mean of 3.51 on the post test. The mean difference of 1.24 was significant at the .01 level.

These various writing projects have had significant impact on writing throughout the country. Educators and researchers are always looking for new ways to improve the art of teaching writing.

Compositions are evaluated in may ways. The reliability and the validity of the assessment instrument affects the interpretation of the data. Cooper and Odell (1977: xi-xii) discussed validity as it related to writing:

> If a measure or measurement scheme is valid, it does what we say it is doing. We want to insist on a careful distinction between predictive validity and two other kinds of validity, content and constuct validity. If a measure has predictive validity, then it predicts performance at some time in the future or it correlates well with some criterion.... If a measure has content validity, then it is an appropriate measure for a writing program. It actually measures the construct of interest in this case, writing ability or writing performance.

Major features that affect the assessment of all compositions in one form or another are vocabulary, syntactic, organizational and stylistic features. These attributes, as Britton, Burgess and others (1975) call them, are influenced by many variables. This includes the writer's purpose, function and sense of audience. Other factors which are not easily measured, but must be considered, are the cognitive, social, emotional, perceptual and linguistic abilities of the writer.

Straw (1981) summarized the research of many with regard to rating vocabulary maturity of a text. An analysis of word choice, length, difficulty and frequency of use helps to determine the maturity of the composition. Syntactic complexity and maturity is another important factor affecting assessment. Nelson as cited by Straw (1981a: 187) discusses syntactic complexity:

> No precise definition or syntactic complexity appears in the literature. However, the consensus of most researchers ... using the same or similar terms (e.g., syntactic, fluency, structural complexity), is that syntactic complexity reflects length of independent clauses, amount of subordination, range of sentence patterns, number of sentence-embedding (or sentence combining), transformations (cluster size), and depth of these transformations.

There are many ways in which syntactical maturity is measured: mean sentence length, T-unit and the transformational and morphemic models. The most common way to assess syntactical maturity today is the Hunt T-unit. The T-unit is defined as an independent and dependent clause with all its modifiers. Controversy exists over the validity of these instruments but Stotsky (1975) seems to consider the T-unit the most valid.

Holistic and primary trait scoring are often used to evaluate compositions. Holistic scoring is particularly significant to this practicum because the Fifth Grade Writing Test is scored holistically. A composition that is scored holistically is rated on its overall merit. No particular aspect of a composition is considered more important than the other. Holistic scoring is based on the Gestalt theory of psychology, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The Writing Manual for New York State Administrators and Teachers (1983: 14) states that compositions are rated on "how well the writer has communicated." A four point scale is used to assess the New York State Writing Test.

Because of the subjectivity of holistic scoring, New York State requires two independent raters to read one composition. If there is a discrepancy in one rating, a third reader is called upon to determine the score (see Appendix A, page 59, and Appendix B, page 60).

Primary trait scoring is another way to assess writing compositions. The (1969-79: 8-9) Writing Achievement Assessment Report describes primary trait scoring in the following way: "The primary trait approach to essay evaluation involves isolating an important writing skill, developing a task to measure it and articulating four levels of proficiency".

The work of the National Network of Writing Projects and the research of Britton, Cooper, Odel, Graves, Calkins and others has changed the way teachers are teaching writing and educators are thinking about writing. States too have recognized the research in this field and the need to

improve the writing competencies of students. As a result, 39 states are now giving writing competency tests.

The writing scores of School District Nine are the lowest in New York City and the Writing competency of students at Community Elementary School 73 contributed to that score. Through the implementation of the program Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach and the writing process, the writing skills of fifth Grade Students at Community Elementary School 73 have improved.

The writer selected this particular methodology because of its strategies and structure. The strategies are easily learned and developed with the appropriate instruction, practice and reinforcement. Teachers who have had little or no formal training in the teaching of writing can easily follow the strategies outlined in the Teacher's Manual.

Rothstein begins with the concept that writing can be made more interesting and that it can be improved by adding, deleting, substituting , and rearranging words. Strategies are presented in the following way:

1. Sentence sense and sentence composing
2. Sentence expension
3. Substitution
4. Moving and Rearranging
5. Combining and embedding
6. Paragraph structure
7. Plans, blueprints and outlines for full length compositions

This methodology in comparison to the Graves/Calkins approach to the writing process is more structured. Structure is what the students at C.E.S. 73 need. In addition, the Graves/Calkins approach to the writing process centers around the writing conference. It takes a certain degree of readiness, discipline, and commitment on the part of the teachers to develop the art of conferencing. At this particular time, teachers at C.E.S. 73 are not willing to make this commitment. Low reading scores (26.9 percent of the student population is reading at or above

grade level) and teacher morale, stress, teacher burn-out, and poor discipline are contributing to the lack of teacher motivation and creativity. At the present time, the more structured approach is needed.

Analysis of the Problem Setting

School District Nine has no particular policy with regard to the implementation of a specific writing program on a district wide basis. Recognizing the need to improve the writing skills of the students in the district, the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent recommended the adoption of a district wide writing program. The two programs being considered were the Silver Burdett English Series, and Teaching Writing a Developmental, Systematic Approach by Evelyn Rothstein, which provides specific writing strategies.

Due to the fact that there were too many varied opinions among the school board members, and administrators both at the district and school level, no one program was selected. A decision was made to pilot the two programs.

Certain schools were designated as pilot schools and the principals in some cases had the option of selecting the program that would best meet their needs. Community Elementary School 73 piloted the Silver Burdett English Series in one fifth grade class. The writer purchased another set of the series as well as the Rothstein program for the students participating in the practicum. The writer assisted the students and teacher by providing the necessary materials, training and administrative and supervisory support.

The writer at the initial stage of the practicum was part of the District Office Staff and was given permission by the principal to implement the project in one fifth grade class. One of the constraints of the practicum was that the writer was not an on-site supervisor and was not in a position to dictate curriculum, programs or procedures. A fifth grade teacher, who enjoys teaching writing and has Chapter 1 eligible students, volunteered to participate in the practicum. The fifth grade teachers at C.E.S. 73 have been required by the Interim-Acting Assistant Principal to adhere to a stringent schedule which covers the mandated curriculum and teachers must provide the

appropriate documentation to assure that these areas are being covered. Teachers are under such pressure to follow this schedule and to complete the required paper work that to incorporate another program into their present one would add to the mounting pressure. The writer conferred with the Interim-Acting Assistnet Principal to see how this schedule could be altered for the teachers participating in the practicum. It was agreed that the teachers would use the language arts period to introduce the writing program and integrate the writing strategies across all content area subjects. The Interim-Acting Assistant Principal at first was not cooperative, however after implementation, she was more receptive to the entire project.

Alternative Strategies

The Language Experience and Whole Language approach to the teaching of reading and writing are alternative strategies to the methodolgy selected for this practicum. It must be noted however, that there are many aspects of all of these programs that overlap.

The reason why these approaches were not selected for the fifth grade writing project was because both of these approaches are more successful when introduced in kindergarten or the first grade.

Roach Van Allen developed the Language Experience Approach in the mid-1940's. Aukerman (1971: 303) states the Van Allen rationale:

> What I think about, I can talk about.
> What I can say, I can write (or someone can write for me).
> What I can write, I can read (and others can read, too).
> I can read what I have written, and I can also read what other people have written for me to read.

The Language Experience Approach is based on the students' own experience. The experience is discussed and dictated by the student. If the student has not yet learned to write, a person who is able to write records the dictated experience. Students learn how to read and write from their own generated material.

Judith Newman (1985: 62) in her book Whole Language Theory in Use describes the components of whole language: "The approach offers children exposure to written language used in

as many different ways as possible. They are offered involvement with written language in and from the environment".

The whole language curriculum also uses predictable materials, story reading, sustained silent reading, and trade books. Much of the whole language curriculum uses language experience to develop both oral and written language. Writing becomes an integral part of this approach and Newman states: "Language experience stories evolve from children's interest and activities. The writing becomes the communal record of what the children have learned or done".

Robert and Marlene McCracken advocate the Language Experience Approach to the teaching of reading and writing. In their book Reading is Only a Tiger's Tail (1972: 105) they state:

> Children must have drill in writing every day. As they learn phonics, they learn to write and as they learn to write, they learn phonics. Writing is practicing phonics or phonic drill, as SSR is reading drill. A major problem in initiating writing is that often the teacher presumes that young children can not write independently. For this reason, the teacher helps too much -- helps the children copy, rather than expecting and demanding independent encoding.

Advocates of the Whole Language and Language Experience methodologies are opposed to the use of the basal readers. Newman (1985) believes that the use of the basal readers is in direct conflict with the theories of language development and the meaningful way in which reading and writing should be taught. She believes that the basal approach to the teaching of reading is fragmented and does not incorporate the literary skills in a holistic fashion. Basal readers are used to teach reading at Community Elementary School 73. Writing is not part of the reading program as advocated in the Whole Language and Language Experience Approach. It is for this reason that both the writing process and Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach was used.

Selected Strategies

Students were introduced to the writing process as one of the main strategies of the practicum. Students internalized the process as they carefully worked through its various stages on a daily basis.

Students developed facility in brainstorming, listing, and all related pre-writing activities. They learned to write drafts and use the technique of peer questioning . Students were encouraged

to revise their papers as many times as necessary and learned how to edit and finalize their papers for publication.

The National Council of Teachers of English defines writing in the following way"

> Writing is a process of selecting, combining, arranging and developing ideas in effective sentences, paragraphs, and often longer units of discourse. The process requires the writer to cope with a number of variables:
>
> . Method of development (narrating, explaining, describing, reporting, persuading).
> . Tone (from very personal to quite formal)
> . Form (from limerick to a formal letter to a long research report)
> . Purpose (from discovering and expressing personal feelings and values to conducting the impersonal "business" of everyday life)
> . Possible audiences (oneself, classmates, a teacher, "the world")

The writing process helps students develop all of these skills.

Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach by Evelyn Rothstein was the primary methodology used to teach writing. This approach provided specific strategies for developing various writing skills. Listing, slotting, sentence and paragraph expansion, the framed paragraph and other organizational patterns were some of the strategies included in the practicum.

Since writing had not been stressed as an integral part of the curriculum at Community Elementary School 73, and writing competencies of students had to be improved, there was a great need to implement a writing program. A combination of the two selected strategies described, the writing process as presented in the Silver Burdett English Series and Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach were used. These methodologies provided a comprehensive approach to the teaching of writing.

In developing broad strategies, the writer provided parent workshops to introduce the writing program and demonstrated various writing strategies. Parents were encouraged to read their childrens' compositions or to have their children read their compositions to them and to motivate their children to write outside of the school setting. Parents were encouraged to ask questions and to participate in workshops offered to improve their own writing skills. Many of the parents in the school are bilingual and not English dominant. Others have limited schooling. As a result, some parents who wanted to help their children with their writing found it difficult.

The writer involved the United Federation of Teacher's Resource Room teacher trainer in the workshops presented by the consultants. The intent was to encourage the teacher trainer to reach out to other school personnel not directly involved in the practicum, and introduce them to the program.

Although the practicum was only to involve class 5-2, it was the intent of the writer to generate as much interest in the program as possible and have other teachers take advantage of the training and available materials.

Chapter 5

IMPLEMENTATION DESIGN

Coordination, Organization and Implementation of the Activities of the Writing Project

On Tuesday, November 12, 1985, the writer conferred with the Stars Chapter 1 Reading teacher at Community Elementary School 73 to investigate the possibility of implementing the Program Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach to one of the fifth grade classes serviced by Chapter 1. The discussion included an overview of the program, the role of the Chapter 1 teacher in the project and projected outcomes. The Stars teacher was to present the information to the fifth grade teachers and seek out a volunteer. On Thursday, Novemeber 14, 1985, the Stars teacher notified the writer that the teacher of class 5-2 wanted to participate in the practicum. The writer made an appointment to meet with the principal on Monday, November 18, 1985 in order to present the proposal and program and get permission to implement the practicum at the school. The principal was extremely cooperative and gave the writer permission to work with the class and teacher of 5-2. The principal assured the writer that provisions would be made for coverages when the teacher had to attend meetings, workshops or conferences. The principal and the writer discussed the fact that since the writer was not an on-site supervisor, the Stars Chapter 1 teacher would not only be a participant in the project but would coordinate on-site activities. After conferring with the principal, the writer was introduced to the teacher of 5-2. The program was briefly discussed and the teacher was shown the materials that were going to be ordered for the class.

On Monday, December 16,1985, Dr. Newell, at the Sub-Cluster Conference call, approved the writer's proposal outline. Pending the approval of the proposal, the writer's practicum would begin.

Purchase orders were generated on December 20, 1985 for Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach and the Silver Burdett English Series. On January 22, 1986, the writer spoke to the Silver Burdett sales representative to arrange for the consultant to

meet the practicum participants. In the interim, the writer approached the teacher of class 5-5, a bilingual class, and asked the teacher if he would like to attend the workshops conducted by both Silver Burdett and Rothstein. The teacher agreed. The teacher would be the recipient of the Silver Burdett English Series purchased by the District Office. The writer would provide the Rothstein materials. The Silver Burdett workshop was conducted on January 30, 1986. In attendance were the Stars teacher and three paraprfessionals, the teachers of class 5-2 and 5-5. The writer was on special assignment for the superintendent and was not able to be present. The Stars Chapter 1 teacher chaired the meeting. The consultant gave an overview of the Silver Burdett English Text and correlated materials (workbooks and writing folders). The writing process was discussed and strategies for implementation given. At the time of this first workshop , teachers had not received any of the Silver Burdett materials.

On January 28, 1985, the writer spoke to the Stars teacher and arranged the dates for the Evelyn Rothstein workshops, the author of Teaching Writing A Developmental Systematic Approach. The dates were then confirmed with Rothstein. The writer sent a memorandum to the principal and all program participants. Initial workshop dates were scheduled for:

February 13, 1986

February 27, 1986

March 13, 1986

March 27, 1986

Additional dates were later scheduled for:

May 8. 1986

May 22, 1986

June 12, 1986

On February 3, 1986, the writer met with the sales representative from Silver Burdett to discuss delivery of materials. Due to an error in processing and the unavailability of certain items that were ordered, shipment was never made. At that time, the sales representative made arrangements to expedite the shipment of in-stock materials.

The writer scheduled a conference with the teacher of class 5-2 on February 5, 1986. At that conference the teacher was given the Teacher's Manual to Teaching Writing A Developmental Systematic Approach and correlated rexograph books. The writer introduced and demonstrated how to teach the two writing strategies: slotting and sentence expansion. The teacher was instructed to introduce these strategies within the next two weeks and integrate them across the curriculum. Slotting is a form of substitution. For example: slot for the subject in the following sentence:

The (girl) walked the dog.
- women
- man
- boy
- Mr. Jones
- grandmother
- father
- mother

Slot for the verb in the following sentence:

The girl (hugged) the dog.
- fed
- touched
- hit
- played (with)

Sentences can be expanded with adjectives, prepositional and adverbial phrases and the use of the five WH's. For example:

Expand with one adjective:

John bought a (foreign) car.
- red
- sports
- old
- new

Expand with two adjectives:

The (young) man went on a (winter) vacation.

handsome	mini
old	extended
fat	exciting
rich	skiing
wealthy	

Expand with a prepositional phrase:

My mother went shopping (at the mall).
with my sister
on Saturday morning
across the street
on her lunch hour

Expand with an adverbial phrase:

(Yesterday), we went to the library.
Last week
This morning

Expand with the WH- questions:

What kind of:
Where:
When:
Why:
How:
How much:

Expand this sentence: The man cut down the tree.

What kind of:	Where:	When:	How much:
young	in Vermont	yesterday	many
old	in the woods	last week	a few
nice	in my backyard	a few hours ago	lots
strong		long ago	several
robust		last night	numerous
		before Christmas	various

Why:
to provide fire wood
to sell Christmas trees
to build a log cabin

The original sentence expanded:

Last week in Vermont, the robust young man cut down, with a chain saw, many pine trees for the Christmas season.

In addition, the teacher was given a writing inventory questionnaire (see Appendix E, page 69) to be given to the children prior to the start of the program. The teacher and writer discussed the questionnaire and the manner in which it was to be administered. The teacher was also given copies of the 1983 Fifth Grade Writing PEP Test Form L (see Appendix D, page 63)to be used as the pre- test and a comparison for all subsequent writing assignments. The teacher of 5-2 was

instructed to prepare a letter to the parents notifying them of their childs' participation in the program and inviting them to take part in a parent workshop on February 25, 1986.

At a subsequent meeting later that day, the writer met with the Stars Chapter 1 teacher and paraprofessionals and shared with them the same information that was discussed with the teacher of 5-2. Unfortunately, the entire group could not meet together because of high teacher absenteeism on that day. The teacher of 5-5 was absent.

On Monday, February 10, 1986, the writer conferred with the teacher of 5-2 and the Stars staff and explained how to complete the Writing Product Analysis Sheet (see Appendix C, page 61). This sheet was used to rate each students' individual piece of writing.

On February 12, 1986, the writer called Evelyn Rothstein to confirm the workshop for February 13, 1986. Since the writer was not on site, arrangements were made by the Stars teacher to insure coverage for the workshop participants.

In attendance at the February 13, 1986 workshop were: the teachers of 5-2 and 5-5, the Stars teacher and three paraprofessionals, the writer and two District Office Staff Developers. The emphasis of Rothstein's first workshop was getting the children started. Rothstein suggested that the students make a book of lists. These lists are topics which students know about from their personal experience and can easily write about. In getting started, Rothstein also developed the idea of word morphology and how words and word endings are used in a sentence. It was suggested that the students complete exercise 1 in Book B of the Easy Writer workbook (part of the Rothstein materials, Appendix F, page 70). This would help students learn how to build sentences and become aware of the placement of words in a sentence and how placement and usage affects meaning.

Rothstein demonstrated and had the participants complete a framed paragraph. A framed paragraph explained Rothstein is an outline in which there are key or structured words with open spaces so that the writer can supply his/her own words. For example, a framed paragraph that Rothstein had the group complete was: The _____ sat down. He was very _____. Rothstein expanded the frame by using a technique called "Grow a Story". In "Growing a Story", a paragraph is expanded by asking the WH- questions. For example, (When) did the

_____sit down. The paragraph was expanded further by using a cause and effect relationship: He was very _____ because (as a result of, since). Rothstein also explained how students could work in groups editing their own papers with a given check list. Rothstein concluded the workshop by summarizing what teachers could do with their class until the next session:

. Make a book of lists.

. Build sentences.

. Use the framed paragraph and "Grow a Story" strategy.

. Stress the writing process: (pre-writing, drafting, and editing).

. Have students edit in groups and by themselves using a checklist. For example:

1. Did you begin a sentence with a capitial letter?
2. Did you end with punctuation?
3. Did you use two words from your book of lists?

After the workshop, the writer, Stars teacher and Rothstein conferred with the principal. At that time, the writer introduced Rothstein to the principal. A discussion addressing the purpose of the workshops was stressed. Rothstein and the writer asked the principal if others, particularly the creative writing and other fifth grade teachers, would be allowed to participate in the training if they wanted to. Permission was granted.

On February 18, 1986, the writer conferred with the teacher of 5-2 and the Stars staff to review the results of the writing pre-test and discussed how the writer completed the Writing Product Analysis Sheets. Copies of these sheets were placed in each of the student's writing folders.

The writer observed the teacher of 5-2 in an informal lesson on February 14, 1986. Some students were writing in their book of lists while others were working on "Growing a Story". The students were attentive and very much involved in their work.

On February 25, 1986, parents of class 5-2 were invited to attend the "Writing Parent Open House". All parents who wanted to attend were welcome. Only eight parents showed up. Of the eight, three were not parents of the students in class 5-2. Just as an aside, it is a major concern

of the administration to involve parents in school functions. Most parents of children in the ghetto schools are single parents. Some work, others have very young children, and many have personal problems which prevent them from becoming involved. Two parents in attendance were Spanish speaking and understood little English. The workshop presentation was translated into Spanish. The writer introduced the program, its purpose and demonstrated the strategies of slotting and sentence expansion. It was difficult for the non-English speaking parents to participate because they were not literate in English. However, these parents seemed to appreciate and understand the worth of the program. Parents were asked to encourage their children to write often and, when and where possible listen to them read their compositions.

On February 26, 1986, the writer called Rothstein to confirm the next day's workshop. A memorandum was written and sent to the teachers notifying them of the date, time and place of the workshop. Arrangements were made by the Stars teacher for coverages.

On February 27, 1986, Rothstein conducted the second workshop in the school library. In attendance were: the teacher of class 5-1, 5-2 and 5-5, the writing and Stars teachers, two District Office Staff Developers, and the three Stars paraprofessionals. Rothstein spent approximately half the workshop reviewing the strategies introduced on February 13, 1986. This was done to familiarize the new staff joining the workshop with the methodology.

The teachers of 5-2 and 5-5 and the Stars Chapter 1 teacher and paraprofessionals shared what was done with the children based on Rothstein's suggestions from the previous workshop. Rothstein then continued the concept of the framed paragraph by giving the teachers a frame that students could use to write book reports. Rothstein asked the participants to complete the frame given below using as content a book recently read:

_____by_____is one of the most_____stories (novels, books) about (that)_____. The author introduces us to several (many) characters who_____.The most significant (important, impressive, touching) character is_____who_____. In addition, there is_____who_____.

The author has set this story in_____during _____. From the author's description of the time and setting, we find out (learn, become aware) _____

The author's writing style also heightens (adds to) the interest of the book. For example,_____

If you are interested in_____and enjoy reading books thet_____, then_____

This frame was taken from the(Rothstein: 14) workshop packet. Rothstein closed the workshop by discussing and reviewing the concept of the writing process and product. The writing process as Rothstein views it, goes beyond the pre-writing, drafting , editing and publication stages. It begins when the writer asks the following questions :

Process	**Product**
The Writer's Questions	**The Writer's Procedures**
. To whom am I writing? . What do I want to say? . How do I want to say it? . What is my plan for writing? . How long will it be? . Can I say it better? . Is it ready for my audience?	Identifying the purpose of the writing or audience to be addressed Gathering pertinent material or experiences Planning and organizing the material or experiences. Composing - or writing a draft Improving the draft through revisions Rewriting the final product or "publishing"

What are the "Starters?"

. Words

. Sentences

. Frames

. Blueprints, outlines, plans

What are the "Improvers?"

. Additions

. Deletions

. Substitutions

. Rearrangements

Levels of Editing

Draft-----Revise----Publish

Self - Peer - "Top"

This overview appears in(Rothstein's: 1) training packet.

Each participant had an opportunity to question or comment on the strategies presented at the session. Rothstein generated interest and motivated the staff. The staff seemed eager to apply the newly learned techniques.

The writer was appointed to the position of Assistant Principal at Community Elementary School 73 on February 28, 1986. As an on-site supervisor, the writer was better able to monitor the program.

On March 5, 1986, the writer observed the teacher of 5-2 give a teacher directed lesson using the framed paragraph for the book report. The teacher used the Judy Blume book Superfudge, which the children were to have read. The teacher worked through the process with the students. Students were told to use the format of the framed paragraph to complete their newly assigned book report. The teacher and writer later discussed the lesson and the reaction and input of the various students. Students liked the format and eagerly volunteered to read their pieces to the class. The mapping of the various responses showed students how different and original their compositions could be using the same frame.

On March 12, 1986, the writer confirmed the March 13,1986 workshop with Rothstein. Arrangements were made for coverages and teachers were notified of the time and place of the meeting by the writer.

In attendance at the March 13, 1986 workshop were: the Stars teacher and three paraprofessionals, the creative writing teacher, two District Office Staff Developers, the writer, and the teachers of 5-2, and 5-5. New to the group was the teacher of 5-1. Rothstein began the session by asking the staff to discuss what students had accomplished since their last meeting.

Teachers shared samples of student compositions and discussed how they approached the suggested strategies.

In preparation for the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Competency Test, Rothstein moved from the framed paragraph to an organizational scheme for developing a composition. The group was given the starter:

There are three reasons why I like
expect
hope
need
wish to

Using the example three reasons why I like, Rothstein handed out three sheets of paper. Each paper was to have one reason. As each reason was developed, it became the draft for a paragraph. The concept of developing these three paragraphs plus an introductory and concluding paragraph was the basis for the workshop. Each participant was asked to complete a composition using this organizational pattern. At the end of the workshop, the compositions were read.

The writer confirmed and made arrangements for the March 27, 1986 workshop. In attendance were: the Stars Chapter 1 teacher and three paraprofessionals, the writing teacher, the writer, the United Federation of Teacher's resource teacher, two District Office Staff Developers, and the teachers of 5-1, 5-2, and 5-5. Teachers began by reading student's "three reasons why" compositions. In the analysis of some of the compositions, discussion centered around the students sticking to and addressing the topic. This is particularly significant and important because no matter how well a composition is written, the only criteria for a zero score on the New York State Fifth Grade Writing PEP Test is if a student does not address the topic or answer the question.

Rothstein addressed other concerns and suggested various techniques for correcting certain errors. For example, one student had a well organized and developed composition. The student introduced the first reason but failed to expand it. The second and third reasons were well developed. Rothstein suggested that the student provide supporting details and insert the missing information using the cut and paste method.

Students wrote letters of invitation on April 7, 1986, requesting that their parents attend "A Parent Writing Workshop" on April 10, 1986. Five parents attended. Members of the Parent's Association who were working in the school were also invited. They were not able to attend because they were involved in a fund raising campaign. The five parents in attendance were not present at the first workshop, so the writer presented an overview of the program, demonstrated the strategies of slotting and the framed paragraph and spoke about what students were presently doing. Samples of student compositions were displayed and parents were encouraged to review their child's writing folder.

Parents were encouraged to try some of the demonstrated techniques. The writer gave simple exercises to reinforce the strategies introduced. Parents were asked to have their children share their writing with them. Students were encouraged to read their papers to their parents. Some parents enjoyed reading and correcting their child's work while others, who are not English dominant, found it difficult. The writer suggested that those parents , listen, motivate and encourage their children to write daily.

On April 11, 1986, the writer visited classes 5-1, 5-2, and 5-5 to discuss with the children the importance of the New York State Writing Competency Test scheduled for April 17, 1986. The test was scheduled a month earlier than anticipated. The New York State Fifth Grade Writing PEP Test had always been given in May. The impact that this may have had on the practicum will be discussed in Chapter Six. Students were required to write a composition a day in preparation for the test. Teachers were asked to simulate testing conditions using the PEP testing format.

Students took the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test on April 17, 1986. The Stars Chapter 1 teacher was given the responsibility to administer all PEP make up tests . Once all testing was completed, the writer arranged for all fifth grade teachers, the Stars and creative writing teacher to meet on the afternoon of April 28, 1986 to score the tests. The writer spent most of the afternoon discussing holistic scoring. Teachers were given examples of various levels of writing based on scores one to four (see Appendix H, page 72) and the paper: "Criteria for

Student Response" (see Appendix A, page 59). Using samples of students' writing from a training packet provided by New York State, the writer and staff discussed the process of scoring. Once the procedure was understood, papers were scored. Test results were due in the District Office on May 5, 1986.

A workshop was scheduled with Rothstein on May 8, 1986. It had to be cancelled because of the scheduling of the New York City Standardized Reading make-up test. The reading test was given on May 7,1986 and make-up testing started on May 8, 1986.

Rothstein conducted a workshop on May 22, 1986. In attendance were: the teachers of 5-1, 5-2, and 5-5, the writer, the Stars teacher and paraprofessionals, the writing teacher and two District Office Staff Developers. Rothstein began by asking the participants to comment on what had been done since the last workshop. The discussion centered around the results, content, and students' use of the program strategies on the New York State Fifth Grade writing Test. The following are some of the comments transcribed from the tape of this workshop:

The Stars Teacher: You can see the difference between the writing ability of the students who used the technique you showed us and the students who had no knowledge of it.

The Writing Teacher: Look at the scores in class 5-2 and 5-5. Those were the students who were exposed to the teaching and look at the students in 5-3 who had no contact with the program (see Tables 7-99, pages 45-48). ...The children who used the techniques did better.

The strategy that Rothstein developed for this session was the Definition Mode. Participants were asked to divide their paper into three columns titled Question, General Category, and Attributes. Rothstein demonstrated how to use this organizational device when defining or describing something. It provides an organizational outline for an expository text. Mapping out information in this organizational and syntactical format makes it easier for students to learn how to develop higher levels of expository writing. Using the comparison and contrasting mode, Rothstein asked the participants "What is a pencil?", then What is a pen?" Information was placed in three colomns. The syntactical placement of a particular word sets up a key for a specific

response. For example, in using the article "a" and the word "that" in the following manner a number of responses can be elicited:

Question	General Category	Attributes
What is a pencil?		
A pencil is a	writing (tool) instrument implement	that is made of looks like has the shape of

Rothstein further demonstrated the concept by reading examples of compositions written by students. In developing a comparison and contrasting essay , Rothstein told the staff to keep the following sentence in mind because this sentence serves as a model for writing this type of a composition: "School busses and city busses have similiarities and differences". This opening sentence can be modified and used in a number of different ways:. For example: George Frederick Handel and Johann Sebastian Bach had many similarities and differences. Using the organizational pattern given above, one would ask under the question column, Who was George Frederick Handel? and on another piece of paper, using the same format, Who was Johann Sebastian Bach? In the general category column, one would put musician. Under attributes, the writer would describe individual characteristics. Organizing information in this way makes it easier for students to write this kind of composition. The workshop concluded with a question and answer period.

On May 28, 1986 the writer observed the writing teacher in class 5-2 using the definition mode and organizational pattern suggested by Rothstein. The question was asked: What is a planet? The students brainstormed and the information was placed on the board. As a follow-up, students were asked to write a composition using the given information. It was obvious that the students needed to practice this strategy in order to work independently. The teacher and students were working together.

On June 3, 1986 the writer conferred with the teacher of 5-2 to review the writing folders and discuss the Writing Product Analysis Sheets. The writer and teacher compared and discussed the improvements students made.

On June 6, 1986, the writer met with the Chapter 1 Stars staff. Chapter 1 student writing folders were reviewed and the data concerning the Writing Product Analysis Sheets were discussed. Particular emphasis was placed on reviewing the work of students in class 5-2.

Rothstein was scheduled for one more workshop on June 12, 1986. The writer cancelled the workshop due to an unexpected change of date for the Fifth Grade Environmental Camping trip to the Poconos. Rescheduling was difficult because of Fifth Grade graduation rehearsals, the senior class trip and other such end term activities.

Before students were able to take their writing folders home, they completed the Writing Inventory Questionnaire. The teacher of class 5-2 and the writer reviewed the contents in the folder and at individual student conferences, emphasized the progress of each child.

On June 21, 1986, all participants met to discuss the merits of the program. Experiences were shared and interesting compositions were read. Although the practicum invovled only the students in class 5-2, other children benefited from their teachers participation in the training. Teachers were satisfied with the results and expressed a desire to continue the program during the 1986-1987 school year.

Chapter 6

EVALUATION

The implementation of Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach at Community Elementary School 73 had a positive effect on the scores of the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test.

There are four fifth grade classes: 5-1, 5-2, 5-3 and 5-5. Students in class 5-1 have the highest reading scores. Students in class 5-5 are bilingual (Spanish Dominent). Students in class 5-2 and 5-3 are heterogeneously grouped.

In the initial planning of this practicum, the writer had to identify a fifth grade teacher who would be willing to participate in the project. Only the teacher of class 5-2 volunteered when approached. Class 5-2 then became the target group for the practicum. The writer had hoped that while the other teachers had not volunteered to participate in the program, they would take advantage of the training and materials and thus have a positive impact on the final results. This in fact did happen. All, but the teacher and students of class of 5-3, had some experience with the program.

Table Six shows the results of Class 5-2's performance on the spring 1986 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test. Column one indicates the score. The writing test is scored on a scale of 0-16. Column two indicates the frequency or number of students receiving a specific score. For example, only two students scored six and five students scored nine. The third column tells the percentage of students achieving a particular score. The last column determines the average percent of the mean. Note that 85.15 percent of the students in the target class scored above the state reference point and only 14.80 percent scored below. These scores are significantly higher then the three other classes.

Table 6

COMPARISON TO STATE REFERENCE POINT/FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

BY CLASS 5-2 - COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 73 - SPRING 1986

Below State Reference Point				At and Above the State Reference Point			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent	Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent
00	0	.00%	.00%	08	6	22.22%	133.32%
01	0	.00%	.00%	09	5	18.51%	92.55%
02	0	.00%	.00%	10	5	18.51%	92.55%
03	0	.00%	.00%	11	1	3.70%	3.70%
04	0	.00%	.00%	12	3	11.11%	33.33%
05	1	3.70%	3.70%	13	1	3.70%	3.70%
06	2	7.40%	14.80%	14	2	7.40%	14.80%
07	1	3.70%	3.70%	15	0	.00%	.00%
				16	0	.00%	.00%
TOTAL	4	14.80%	22.20%		23	85.15%	373.95%
Average Percent of the Mean			5.55%	Average Percent of the Mean			16.26%

Table 7 indicates the results of class 5-3. The students and teacher of this class had absolutely no exposure to the program or any of its strategies. Note that only 18.17 percent of the students scored at and above the state reference point and 81.79 percent scored below it. Scores in this class were the lowest on the grade.

Table 7

COMPARISON TO STATE REFERENCE POINT/FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

BY CLASS - 5-3 - COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 73 - SPRING 1986

Below State Reference Point				At and Above the State Reference Point			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent	Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent
00	1	4.54%	4.54%	08	3	13.63%	40.89%
01	0	.00%	.00%	09	0	.00%	.00%
02	2	9.09%	18.18%	10	1	4.54%	4.54%
03	1	4.54%	4.54%	11	0	.00%	
04	3	13.63%	40.89%	12	0	.00%	
05	4	18.18%	72.72%	13	0	.00%	
06	4	18.18%	72.72%	14	0	.00%	
07	3	13.63%	40.89%	15	0	.00%	
				16	0	.00%	
TOTAL	18	81.79%	254.48%		4	18.17%	45.43%
Average Percent of the Mean			14.14%	Average Percent of the Mean			11.36%

Students in class 5-1 (see Table 8) did have an opportunity to apply some of the strategies learned. The teacher of this class did attend some of the scheduled workshops. Students in this class scored 59.24 percent at and above the state reference point and 40.72 percent below.

Table 8

COMPARISON TO STATE REFERENCE POINT/FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION BY CLASS 5-1 -COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 73 - SPRING 1986

Below State Reference Point				At and Above the State Reference Point			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent	Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent
00	0	.00%	.00%	08	4	14.81%	59.24%
01	0	.00%	.00%	09	3	11.11%	33.33%
02	0	.00%	.00%	10	4	14.81%	59.24%
03	0	.00%	.00%	11	3	11.11%	33.33%
04	4	14.81%	59.24%	12	2	7.40%	14.80%
05	3	11.11%	33.33%	13	0	.00%	
06	2	7.40%	14.80%	14	0	.00%	
07	2	7.40%	14.80%	15	0	.00%	
				16	0	.00%	
TOTAL	11	40.72%	122.17%		16	59.24%	199.94%
Average Percent of the Mean			11.11%	Average Percent of the Mean			12.50%

Students in class 5-5 are bilingual. The student's dominant language is Spanish. These children were exposed to the program. Their teacher attended most of the training sessions. Table Nine shows that 50 percent of the students scored at and above the state reference point and 50 percent below. For non-English dominant bilingual students the results were positive.

Table 9

COMPARISON TO STATE REFERENCE POINT/FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

BY CLASS 5-5 - COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 73 -SPRING 1986

Below State Reference Point				At and Above the State Reference Point			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent	Score	Frequency	Percent	Frequency X Percent
00	0	.00%	.00%	08	2	20.00%	40.00%
01	0	.00%	.00%	09	0	.00%	.00%
02	0	.00%	.00%	10	1	10.00%	10.00%
03	0	.00%	.00%	11	0	.00%	.00%
04	0	.00%	.00%	12	0	.00%	.00%
05	0	.00%	.00%	13	1	10.00%	10.00%
06	3	30.00%	90.00%	14	0	.00%	.00%
07	2	20.00%	40.00%	15	1	10.00%	10.00%
				16	0	.00%	.00%
TOTAL	5	50.00%	130.00%		5	50.00%	70.00%
Average Percent of the Mean			26.00%	Average Percent of the Mean			14.00%

Table 10 summarizes each class' score above and below the state reference point according to rank.

Table 10

SUMMARY OF CLASS SCORES ABOVE AND BELOW THE STATE REFERENCE POINT

COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 73 - SPRING 1986

Class	Below The State Reference Point	Above the State Reference Point
5-2	14.80%	85.15%
5-1	40.71%	59.24%
5-5	50.00%	50.00%
5-3	81.79%	18.17%

Evaluation of Terminal Objectives

The writer identified three terminal objectives for this practicum; two out of three were achieved. The following are the objectives with an analysis of data.

As a result of using specific writing instructional materials and strategies during the period January 1986 to June 1986, the students in class 5-2 will demonstrate an improvement in writing skills by reducing by 1.5 percent, the average of the mean, the number of students falling below the state reference point in 1986 as compared to the spring 1984 and spring 1985 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test. The average percent of the mean of students falling below the state reference point in 1985 was 9.02 percent. The average percent of the mean of students in class 5-2 falling below the state reference point in the spring of 1986 was 5.55 percent. The average mean difference was 3.47 percent.

Table 11

COMPARISON OF THE AVERAGE PERCENT OF THE MEAN SCORING BELOW THE STATE REFERENCE POINT AND THE POSITIVE DIFFERENCE GRADE 5 -SPRING 1985 - CLASS 5-2 SPRING 1986

Mean Below 1985	Mean Below 1986	Difference
9.02 %	5.55 %	3.47%

The writer predicted that students would improve their writing skills by reducing the average percent of the mean of students falling below the state reference point by 1.5 percent. That figure was reduced by 3.47 percent. A smaller percentage of students fell below the state reference point in class 5-2 on the spring 1986 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test as compared to the spring 1985 test. The objective was achieved.

The second objective states:

As a result of using specific writing instructional strategies during the period January 1986 to June 1986, the students of class 5-2 will demonstrate an improvement in writing skills by increasing by 3.4 percent, the average percent of the mean, the students who scored above the state reference point in 1986 as compared to the spring 1984 and spring 1985 New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test. Students in class 5-2 improved by increasing the mean 3.28 percent. The writer predicted the improvement to be 3.4 percent. There was a negative difference of .12 percent. However, one needs only to examine Table 6-11 to show that class 5-2 made significant gains when compared to the other fifth grade classes.

Table 12

COMPARISON OF THE AVERAGE PERCENT OF THE MEAN SCORING ABOVE THE STATE REFERENCE POINT AND THE POSITIVE DIFFERENCE GRADE 5 - SPRING 1985 - CLASS 5-2 SPRING 1986

Mean Above 1985	Mean Above 1986	Difference
12.98%	16.14%	3.28%

The writer projected in the third objective that as a result of regularly monitoring specific writing strategies during the period January 1986 to June 1986, 60 percent of the students in class 5-2 would demonstrate sequential development of writing skills in three out of five skill areas as measured by the New York State Writing Product Analysis Sheet (WPAS). The five areas meassured on the (WPAS) were: Task/Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, Language and Mechanics (see Appendix C, page 61). Eighty five percent (85.18%) of the students improved by achieving at least one increment of growth in three out of five areas. Most students improved in the area of organization. The writer believes that this was due to the emphasis placed on the three organizational strategies: the framed paragraph, three reasons why and the definition

mode. Twenty-nine percent (29.6%) of the students achieved more than one increment of growth in three out of the five areas on the New York State Writing Product Analysis Sheet. The results were encouraging.

Evaluating the Affective Impact of the Writing Program

Prior to and at the termination of the implementation of the practicum, students in class 5-2 completed a Writing Inventory Questionnaire (see Appendix E, page 69). It is difficult to access the validity of such a questionnaire as one does not always know if the respondent is expressing true feelings. The questionnaire indicated:

(1) At the termination of the program 21.4 percent of the students liked to write down their ideas as compared to 12.5 percent prior to the program.

(2) Twenty-five percent of the students expressed that they were not good at writing prior to the program and only 6.25 percent felt that way afterwards.

(3) Prior to the program, 17.8 percent of the students expected to do poorly in writing as compared to none at the end of the program.

(4) Twenty-one percent of the students believed that they would do poorly when handing in a composition prior to the implementation of the program as compared to 6.25 percent afterwards.

(5) Fourteen percent of the students avoided writing prior to the program as compared to none afterwards.

If in fact the responses were a true indication of students' feelings towards writing, then it can be said that some students' attitudes did change as a result of this practicum.

Side Effects

The implementation of Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach was successful in providing a formalized structured writing program where no program or scope and sequence of writing skills had ever existed. While the statistics indicated a marked improvement

in all areas of the objectives that were to be achieved, the writer believed that scores could have been higher. Scores were based on the results of the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test given on April 17, 1986. The New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test had always been given in May. This was the first year the test was administered in April. Students would have had the advantage of an additional month of instruction , as originally planned, prior to the taking of the test.

The integration of the Rothstein and Silver Burdett English Writing methodologies never materialized as planned. Silver Burdett was not able to provide all ordered materials, particularly the Writing Work Folders which included specific writing activities, that were to be included in the program.

The writer at the initial stage of the practicum was not an on-site supervisor and daily monitoring of the program was impossible. The writer was appointed Assistant Principal at Community Elementary School 73 on February 28, 1986 and was on-site as of March 3, 1986. The writer was not given any specific grade assignments because supervisory assignments were made prior to the writer's arrival. The principal gave the writer the authority to work with all teachers in every grade as needed. In working with class 5-2 and other fifth grade teachers and students, the writer had to work within the mandates of the fifth grade site supervisor.

Even with side effects, students made significant improvements in their writing skills. The program Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach was successful at Community Elementary School 73.

Chapter 7

DECISION ON FUTURE

Maintaining the Program

It is extremely important that the program Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach be continued during the 1986-1987 school year. The implementation of this year's practicum provided a structured and formal writing program at Community Elementary School 73. It provided staff development in writing and encouraged, motivated and improved the writing skills of students at Community Elementary School 73.

The writer will supervise the upper grades during the 1986-1987 school year and will require implementation of this program across the curriculum and in all classes. The writer will provide workshops, grade and individual conferences to assist teachers in the implementation and maintenance of the program.

All students will be required to have a writing folder and teachers will monitor students' writing and diagnose and remediate specific skills through the use of the New York State Writing Product Analysis Sheet. Students will be introduced to at least one strategy a month and all previously taught strategies will continually be practiced, reinforced, and reviewed in a spiraling fashion through out the year and in all content area subjects. The writer will request that teachers submit samples of students' work attached to the Writing Product Analysis Sheet with weekly lesson plans.

The writer will stress the reading/writing connection and assist teachers in integrating writing into the formal reading lesson plan. Writing will become part of that lesson and thus help to improve reading achievement.

The instructional leader can affect achievement in the school. The implementation of this program and the manner in which this project and process will be approached will have a positive impact on the school in general and the participants in particular.

Dissemination

The writer will summarize the findings of the practicum in the superintendents' curriculum bulletin "School Activities Monthly" (SAM). The district also requires teachers to attend in-service staff development workshops two days prior to the opening of school. The writer will conduct a session on the writing process and give a brief overview of the writing strategies introduced during the practicum. Statistics demonstrating student achievement will be discussed. Teachers will be encouraged to adopt Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach at their school.

The writer will inform the parents of their childrens' participation in the writing program and invite them to attend an "Open House". The writer will present an overview of the program and stress the importance of developing good communication skills.

Recommendations and Conclusions

It is recommended that the program Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach be implemented in grades three, four and five. The writer believes that third and fourth grade students, who will have had the advantage of two and three years of formalized writing instruction, will view writing as a craft and develop a more sophisticated style of narrative and expository types of writing.

It is important to develop good writing skills in the elementary school. Through the implementation of a formalized writing program, students develop writing competencies at an early age. The writer recommends that writing be intergrated into every aspect of the curriculum. Through writing the teacher can reinforce, review, and summarize lessons and units.

The writer recommends that the administration place a heavy emphasis on the improvement of writing instruction. This will result in improved writing skills and better performance on the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test.

The successful implementation of Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach has helped improve the writing achievement of students in class 5-2 and other fifth grade students

at Community Elementary School 73. The program is presently being implemented in six out of thirty-two school sites in the district. Adoption of this program can help improve the district's ranking within the city and provide continuity of instruction for students moving from one school to another within the district. Therefore, the writer recommends that the school district adopt Teaching Writing A Developmental, Systematic Approach in all of its schools.

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CRITERIA FOR RATING STUDENT RESPONSES*

LEVEL 4	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 1
Develops the assigned topic in an interesting and imaginative way.			
Demonstrates a logical plan of organization and coherence in the development of ideas.	Develops the assigned topic using an acceptable plan of organization.	Attempts to develop the assigned topic but demonstrates weakness in organization and may include digressions.	Minimally addresses the assigned topic but lacks a plan of organization.
Develops ideas fully through the use of support material (examples, reasons, details, explanations, etc.) that is relevant and appropriate.	Demonstrates satisfactory development of ideas through the use of adequate support material.	Demonstrates weakness in the development of ideas with little use of support material.	Does not use support material in the development of ideas or uses irrelevant material.
Shows skillful use of sentence variety.	Uses some sentence variety.	Demonstrates sentence sense but has little sentence variety.	Demonstrates a lack of sentence sense.
Uses specific, vivid language.	Uses appropriate language.	Occasionally uses inappropriate or incorrect language.	Frequently uses inappropriate or incorrect language.
Makes few or no mechanical errors.	Makes mechanical errors which do not interfere with communication.	Makes mechanical errors which interfere with communication.	Makes mechanical errors which seriously interfere with communication.

ZERO PAPER: Is totally unrelated to the topic;
or
Is illegible, i.e., includes so many indecipherable words that no sense can be made of the response;
or
Is incoherent, i.e., words are legible but syntax is so garbled that no sense can be made of the response;
or
Is a blank paper.

*Minor revisions have been made in these criteria since they were first published in the Writing Test for New York State Elementary Schools, Rater Training Packet, Fall 1982.

Appendix B

METHOD FOR USING THIRD RATING
TO RESOLVE DISCREPANT SCORES

Steps:

a. Compare the three ratings.

b. If two of the three scores agree, drop the discrepant score.

c. If two of the scores are contiguous, drop the most discrepant score.

d. If the third rating is the middle score, double the third rating and drop the two divergent scores.

Examples:

Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Resolved scores for response	Reason
1	3	If 1, then	1-1	Agreement (2 of the 3 scores agree, discrepant score dropped)
		If 2, then	2-2	Middle score doubled (Score between divergent scores dropped)
		If 3, then	3-3	Agreement (2 of the 3 scores agree, discrepant score dropped)
		If 4, then	3-4	Contiguous (2 nearest scores used, most discrepant score dropped)
1	4	If 1, then	1-1	Agreement
		If 2, then	1-2	Contiguous
		If 3, then	3-4	Contiguous
		If 4, then	4-4	Agreement
0	1	If 0, then	0-0	Agreement
		If 1, then	1-1	Agreement (drop zero score)
		If 2, then	1-2	Contiguous (drop zero score)
		If 3 or 4, then to fourth rater (see next page)		

Appendix C

SAMPLE ANALYSIS SHEET

WRITING TEST FOR NEW YORK STATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
STUDENT WRITING PRODUCT ANALYSIS SHEET

NAME _____ GRADE _____ DATE _____

SCHOOL _____ TEACHER'S NAME _____

STAR (*) PRIORITY ITEM(S)	DIAGNOSIS/COMMENTS TASK I	DIAGNOSIS/COMMENTS TASK II	INSTRUCTIONAL STATEMENTS
The student needs instruction in:			
TASK/CONTENT			
a. Responding appropriately to the requirements of the task (audience, purpose, form, etc.)			
b. Providing sufficient information to respond adequately to the task (ideas, explanations, examples, etc.)			
c. Selecting appropriate information for focus or emphasis			
d. Excluding irrelevant material			
e. Maintaining a consistent point of view			
ORGANIZATION			
a. Unifying the piece by means of appropriate generalizations			
b. Supporting generalizations and conclusions by providing reasons, details, examples, etc.			
c. Making [illegible]			

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Table C (Cont'd.)

Star(*) Priority Item(s)	*Diagnosis/Comments* *Part 1*	*Part 2*	*Instructional Statements*
Sentence Structure			
a. Avoiding sentence fragments			
b. Avoiding run-on sentences			
c. Using sentences of varied types and lengths			
Language			
a. Using specific, vivid words			
b. Forming words correctly			
c. Using words accurately			
d. Avoiding unnecessary repetition			
Mechanics/Usage			
a. Developing spelling skills			
b. Using punctuation correctly			
c. Using capital letters correctly			
d. Usage Subject/verb agreement Verb tenses Pronoun references Other: _____			

WRITING TEST

For New York State Elementary Schools

FORM L

Student _____ Date _____

Part 1

TO THE STUDENT

This is a test to find out how well you write. The test has two parts. Today you will take Part 1. You will be given as much time as you need to prepare your answer. Take your time and work carefully. You must hand in the test booklet and scrap paper along with your final answer paper.

DO NOT OPEN THIS TEST BOOKLET UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

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The University of the State of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Albany, New York 12234

DET 753 L-1 (4-83—330,000)

Directions: For Part 1 of the test, you are to write about the topic in the box below.

> After you get up some days, nothing seems to go right.
>
> Write a composition of about 150 words telling about a day when nothing seemed to go right for you.

****
****

NOTES:

1. Think of a day when things did not go right for you.

2. What were some things that did not go right for you on that day?

3. Think about how you might end your composition.

In preparing your answer, remember to:

1. Write your first draft on scrap paper.

2. Read carefully what you have written.

3. Make any changes that will improve your first draft.

4. Write your final answer on the answer paper given to you by your teacher. Use a pen to write your final answer.

WRITING TEST

For New York State Elementary Schools

FORM L

Student _____ Date _____

Part 2

TO THE STUDENT

Today you will take Part 2 of the writing test. You will be given as much time as you need to prepare your answer. Take your time and work carefully. You must hand in the test booklet and scrap paper along with your final answer paper.

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Albany, New York 12234

DET 753 L-2 (4-83—330,000)

Directions: For Part 2 of the test, you are to write about the topic in the box below.

> Pretend that you are only five inches tall.
>
> Write a composition of about 150 words telling what your life as a five-inch person is like.

****
****

NOTES:

1. Think about what it would be like to be only five inches tall. (The black line on the left-hand side of this page is about five inches long.)

2. What are some things that might happen to you because you are only five inches tall?

3. Think about how you might end your composition.

In preparing your answer, remember to:

1. Write your first draft on scrap paper.

2. Read carefully what you have written.

3. Make any changes that will improve your first draft.

4. Write your final answer on the answer paper given to you by your teacher. Use a pen to write your final answer.

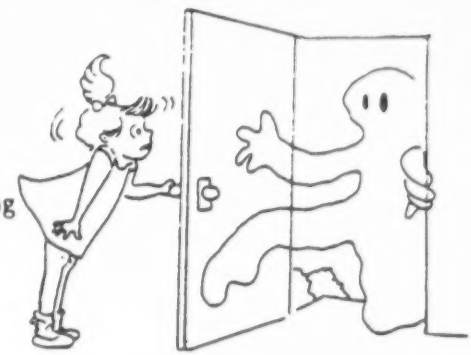
WRITING INVENTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1. I like to write down my ideas				
2. I am no good at writing				
3. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time				
4. People seem to enjoy what I write				
5. I expect to do poorly in composition classes before I take them				
6. I look forward to writing down my ideas				
7. I write for other reasons besides school				
8. When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly				
9. I enjoy writing				
10. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be marked				
11. I feel that I know how to clearly express my ideas in writing.				
12. I avoid writing				

Adapted from a Questionnaire, "How Feel About Writing" Richard M. Bossone and Lyn Troyka, The City University of New York. Pg. 45 Writing Achievement 1969-79

BE A BUILDER

Words are like blocks. They can be used to build sentences. Take a word from List A and a word with the same number from List B. Write a sentence. Use both of those words in the same sentence.
Write seven sentences.



EXAMPLE

window/windows open/opens/opened/opening

All the **windows** were **opened** to let in the sunshine.

OR

The **windows** were **open**, but the ghost came through the door.

List A These words are **nouns.**	List B These words are **verbs.**
1. truck	1. drive/drives/drove/driving
2. frog	2. jump/jumps/jumped/jumping
3. kite	3. fly/flies/flew/flying
4. kitten	4. wish/wishes/wishing/wished
5. boy	5. look/looks/looked/looking
6. flower	6. grow/grows/grew/growing
7. hunter	7. find/finds/found/finding

CHECKLIST FOR PROOFREADING

- Did you use a **noun** and a **verb** in each sentence?
- Did you begin each sentence with a capital letter?
- Did you end each sentence with the correct punctuation?

EXTRA CREDIT

Make a list of four things you see in your classroom. Write two sentences. Use two words from your list in each sentence.

0203

Page 1

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WRITING TEST

For New York State Elementary Schools

Spring 1986

Student_____ Date_____

School_____ City or P.O._____

Part 1

TO THE STUDENT

This is a test to find out how well you write. The test has two parts. Today you will take Part 1. Take your time and work carefully. You will have about two hours, which should be enough time for you to prepare your composition. You must hand in the test booklet and scrap paper along with the final copy of your composition.

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DET 1073 (10-85—285,000)
85-7403

Directions: For Part 1 of the test, you are to write about the topic in the box below.

> Sometimes learning how to do something new is very difficult.
>
> Write a composition of about 150 words telling how you learned to do something new that was difficult to learn.

NOTES:

1. What were you learning to do?

2. What are some things that happened while you were learning to do it?

3. Think how you might end your story.

In preparing your story, remember to:

1. Write your first draft on scrap paper.

2. Read carefully what you have written.

3. Make any changes that will improve your first draft.

4. Write your final copy on the answer paper given to you by your teacher. Use a pen to write your final copy.

5. Draw a line through any mistake you may make when you are writing your final copy. Make the correction and continue on with your final copy. You do not need to begin a new final copy.

6. Read your final copy before you hand it in to make sure you have not made any copying mistakes.

WRITING TEST

For New York State Elementary Schools

Spring 1986

Student_____ Date _____

School_____ City or P.O._____

Part 2

TO THE STUDENT

Today you will take Part 2 of the writing test. Take your time and work carefully. You will have about two hours, which should be enough time for you to prepare your story. You must hand in the test booklet and scrap paper along with the final copy of your story.

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Albany, New York 12234

DET 1103 (10-85 – 285,000)
85-7402

Directions: For Part 2 of the test, you are to write about the topic in the box below.

> Pretend that you had the power to be some other person for one day.
>
> Write a story of about 150 words telling what your day as that other person was like.

****

****

NOTES:

1. Who is the person that you became?

2. What did you do during the day you were that person?

3. Think how you might end your story.

In preparing your story, remember to:

1. Write your first draft on scrap paper.

2. Read carefully what you have written.

3. Make any changes that will improve your first draft.

4. Write your final copy on the answer paper given to you by your teacher. Use a pen to write your final copy.

5. Draw a line through any mistake you may make when you are writing your final copy. Make the correction and continue on with your final copy. You do not need to begin a new final copy.

6. Read your final copy before you hand it in to make sure you have not made any copying mistakes.

[3]

SCORE 1 Graded Model Writing Sample 77

Somthing that made me angry

I Get angry in my house when my mama do not let my go out side. an my Father hit my For Nothing.

SCORE 2 Graded Model Writing Sample

When my cheeseburger felton the floor. I was angry because I was hungry that day. And I couldn't get no ~~mo~~ more and when I got my Soda it had spilled all over the table. and When my Soda spilled that made me even ~~mo~~ angrier. and then my stomach just drop down and when I ~~pt~~ put my hand ~~and~~ in my pocket and went away.

I'll tell you what makes me angry. Every time I talk with my friend on the phone my sister always pulls me and talks to me when I'm already talking with my friend. Its really wierd. When my sister is talking to me I think what my sister is saying is what my friend is saying. Do you understand I'll put it another way. When I'm talking with my friend my sister talks to me and what my sister says I think my friend is saying. That's what makes me mad.

SCORE 4 Graded Model Writing Sample

One day when I went outside in the schoolyard my friend started to run away from me. I ran after her. When I caught up to her she said, "I don't want to play with the fat cow." Then I said, "What fat cow." She said, "your friend Carol." That got me mad. Then I said, "Good if she is not going to play I am not going to play with you." So then we did not talk to each other. Then she came over and said, "I'm sorry we will play with Carol." Then we made up.